

MATWATCH

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VOL. 4, NO. 11

MARCH 18-24

THIS WEEK'S

HEADLINES

SID ASKING \$350G TO STAY PUT???

ATLANTA---Insiders close to World Championship Wrestling, Inc., say Sid (Rudy) Vicious is asking a reported \$350,000-a-year to renew his WCW contract.

The pact for Vicious, who started with WCW in April 1989, expires in two weeks and the WCW star is reportedly being courted heavily by Titan Sports for a post-WRESTLEMANIA debut.

One WCW official says the estimate of Vicious' asking price is considered high but "a tough negotiation" is expected.

IRON SHEIK RETURNS TO WWF IN NEW ROLE

STAMFORD CT---Iron Sheik Khosrow Vaziri has signed to return to the World Wrestling Federation in a new character.

Vaziri will portray an alleged relative of Mommar Ghadafi and reportedly will team with Sgt. Slaughter in some summer matches.

Insiders say Vaziri could be instrumental in an eventual turn of Sarge by SUMMER SLAM to revive the old Slaughter-Sheik series.

MANSFIELD, KEIRN SET TO REVIVE PWF

ORLANDO---Former Continental Lover Eddy Mansfield and Steve Keirn are attempting to revive Florida's Professional Wrestling Federation.

Mansfield, operating under the Continental Lover Promotions banner, is the Columbus GA native who exposed wrestling's inside secrets on a 1985 edition of ABC's 20/20. A Florida law firm had been working with former PWF partner Mike Graham and Keirn on developing a new television package.

Insiders say Mansfield and Keirn are planning a TV taping at Universal Studios near Orlando next month. Keirn's PWF suspended cards in January after the Tampa Sportatorium was closed. Graham has since become a road agent for World Championship Wrestling.

The Pay-Per-View Pioneer

WM7: TIME TO GET IT OVER

The easy thing on **WRESTLEMANIA** week would be to rake Vince McMahon over the coals one more time for his insensitive exploitation of a war. But that master strategist, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, has already shot Vince in the foot, so other questions are more pertinent.

WRESTLEMANIA VII will be nicely profitable. That was a given even with the Sgt. Slaughter-Hulk Hogan Persian Gulf ripoff. But all indicators point to this being the lowest percentage of buy-ins for the WWF's flagship show. Last year's Toronto spectacular scored only a 3.9%, well down from the projections of a 5.5-6% from Titan Sports. A random survey of key cable operators and the two major pay distributors, Viewer's Choice and Request TV, reveals---as of last Friday---the slimnest number of pre-**WRESTLEMANIA** orders this close to the show. Realistic expectations with the \$29.95 price (and some cablers in major cities are charging \$49.95 the day of the show) will probably fall between a 3-3.5% buy-rate for the 13 million unduplicated pay homes.



Steve

Beverly

Assuming a 3.5 percent subscription, the 455,000 homes would bring Titan a gross of \$14.5 million, not chicken feed. But that is far less than the hope of a \$20 million-plus bonanza from the anticipated Los Angeles Coliseum sellout and ancillary reams of publicity from a 100,000-seat attendance. This time, as late as two weeks before the show, tickets remained unsold for the

L.A. Sports Arena show, though Titan was squashing that story. After paying cable splits, Titan would gross \$5.5-6 million, a decline in pay-per-view revenues from **WRESTLEMANIA** for the second straight year.

Several things, in review, are apparent for the meltdown: 1) Even with the barrage of negative publicity Titan has had to endure, from newsletters to **SPORTS ILLUSTRATED**, **VARIETY** and **THE NEW YORK TIMES**, America has simply cooled to the Hogan-Slaughter angle, as it has to wrestling in general. With the quick U.S. victory in Iraq, Vince's timing was terrible and one cannot put heat on Slaughter when his idol Saddam has already been squashed. If you parallel it to the war story, Slaughter is now just another heel; 2) Despite Titan's **SUMMER SLAM** test-market strategy of three-level pricing in an attempt to prove the \$30 tag is not too high, I contend it is. Particularly in a year of recession which has not ended, more **WRESTLEMANIA** pooling and cost-splitting will occur. This show is not so extraordinary that Vince can command \$30 for people "on the bubble" as to whether they can afford it; 3) This is the first year pre-**WRESTLEMANIA** ratings on cable and in syndication have not markedly increased prior to WM. The NBC February special's lowly numbers are simply another indication the **MANIA** has gone out of the wrestling.

But I think a sidelight story developing in mainline sports is important to note, considering **WRESTLEMANIA**'s history. Despite being predated on payable by the long-forgotten WWF **WRESTLING CLASSIC**, the dramatic success of **WRESTLEMANIA III** on pay-per-view pioneered the road for what I predict will be the next major revenue-producer for major league sports in this country.

Wrestling has, in fact, paved the way for legitimate sports in all forms of television dating back to the 1940s. Its success in the early years on network television (along with boxing) proved an audience was there for big-

(Continued on Page 2)

MATWATCH

Page 2

Vol. 4, No. 11/March 18-24

STEVE BEVERLY

(Continued from Page 1)

time sports on the tube. In 1976, when Ted Turner put his WTCG on a satellite, the path was being trod ahead of McMahon for a move to today's national promotions. GEORGIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING was opened to a homogenized, continental audience predating McMahon's Madison Square Garden shows going to the old U-A/Columbia (now USA) network in 1979. By the late 1980s, basic cable became a necessary revenue stream for the NBA, NFL and baseball to afford megabucks star contracts.

The breakthrough of WRESTLEMANIA III proved an audience would pay a premium price for a well-marketed one-time-only event and opened the door for boxing to follow the same strategy. Concerts soon followed.

In the last month, owners and executives of major league teams staged a convention to discuss the future of pay-per-view for their teams and, I'm here to tell you, it is only a couple of years from reality. CBS lost \$100 million in 1990 on the first year of its four-year, \$1 billion baseball deal. Only ABC made money on the NFL of the three networks, TNT and ESPN and then, only because it had the Super Bowl, a perpetual money machine. The \$600 million NBA deal will be marginally profitable for NBC but a big question is if the 1992 Olympics will be in the black for either CBS or NBC. NBC is gambling on pay-per-view for selected Summer Olympics events, in which you would pay a premium of \$150 for the total package.

In short, the networks can no longer afford nine and ten-figure sports contracts because the rights fees make them a devastating drain on profits. Advertisers can no longer pony up the increases to fund the big hikes in rights. So, the NBA, NFL and baseball are all examining pay-per-view.

You can expect the NFL to test-market PPV in its next TV contract. Some baseball teams are offering packages of games on PPV at \$9.95 per. College football has been experimenting for four years with pay cable for non-televised games. Last fall, the University of Tennessee packaged two games for PPV at \$24.95 each. They weren't big draws because the opponents were weak but you can bet they'll be back trying next year.

No less an expert than the founder of ABC, Leonard Golden-son, predicts we'll see big-time sports eventually all go to pay-per-view. In his newly-published book, BEATING THE ODDS, Goldenson writes: "I believe the day is not far off when football, baseball, and other top sports, and perhaps even feature pictures, will be on a pay-per-view basis. This is because as costs continue to escalate, the three networks will no longer be able to retrieve that money through advertising alone. That may be ten or fifteen years down the line...but I think it has to happen. It's all but inevitable."

WRESTLEMANIA has fathered all of this by proving it works. But I believe the price scales wrestling enthusiasts are willing to pay for the spectaculars have peaked. Plus, with so much of PPV wrestling evolving into one-match shows, fans are becoming more selective as to which supercards they'll buy.

Where is it going? I'll give you an educated thought. The move of Titan and Turner this spring and summer into lower-cost, pre-taped pay events is one evolution. The \$5.95-9.95 multi-airing program I predict will become popular because it will allow viewers to see a quality production more at his or her own convenience. Second, I believe within two years, if not sooner, the big two organizations will be packaging their

pay events on an annual or semi-annual "season ticket" basis. Perhaps McMahon or Turner will offer an entire pay schedule for a \$100-\$125 annual subscription fee, or a \$75-80 tier for the major live pay events. It makes sense with the anticipated expansion of pay-per-view homes to 25-30 million by 1994.

Plus, I stick to my guns about what this holds for the ultimate effect on arenas. The PPV evolution will eventually lead to wrestling becoming an event-of-the-month industry, much like pro boxing. Weekly TV shows will survive but the WWF and WCW will likely cut huge travel expenses, end the barnstorming and put their eggs exclusively into monthly live pay events. And when the pay universe reaches 30 million homes, it will make perfect business sense. The only thing constant about today's TV technology is change and it is inevitable the economics of pay-cable, pioneered by WRESTLEMANIA, will make the days of the nightly arena show obsolete.

As for Hogan-Slaughter, Vince just needs to get it over and admit to himself---if not to the public---that it was a lousy idea. But let's hope we don't get into another war soon. It will probably tax McMahon's brain and taste buds too much.

Another Memphis View

TRAMEL: IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME

JONESBORO AR----He's been a virtual historian of Memphis wrestling in the last decade. But RASSLIN' RIOT editor Brian Tramel says the end of Jerry Jarrett Promotions wrestling at the Mid-South Coliseum was inevitable.

In a phone interview last week, Tramel said: "To me, it's sorta sad. But in another way, it's, hey, Jerry Jarrett, you've killed the promotion." Jarrett has opted to leave the MSC for the smaller 3,000-seat Pipkin (Youth) Building.

"People are saying, no, we won't pay \$8.25 to see the same stuff we've seen for years," said Tramel. "Nobody wants to see Memphis wrestling now." He added, "The Mid-South Coliseum had meant something for so long but it really started to go when the Fabulous Ones left (in 1986). They were as big and maybe even bigger than (Jerry) Lawler. Then, we had Lance (Russell) leave (for the NWA in 1989). I didn't really realize how much Lance did for the promotion but it hasn't been the same on TV since he left."

Tramel, who has had some confrontations with Lawler as a ring insider, puts that aside in his perspective. "The Mid-South Coliseum was the house that Lawler built. It is also the house Lawler destroyed. From his perspective and Bill Dundee's, all of them who have been there so long, they know they're always going to be there. But the Fabs couldn't even draw money in January because they were 1985. The crowd has seen it all before and they're saying, 'Give us somebody else to cheer for.' Unfortunately, it's too late."

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MATWATCH

Page 3

Vol. 4, No. 11/March 18-24

UWF

Don Muraco d. Captain

Bad; (LUMBERJACK MATCH) Paul Orndorff d. Steve Williams by DQ when Steve hits ref. Orndorff asks for cage match after; B. Brian Blair d. Beast; (CAPT. LOU'S CORNER) Wet 'n' Wild; Power Twins d. Tom Brandi/Chris Michaels. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

WWE SYN

[SPOTLIGHT]: Curt Hennig d. Pex Whatley; (ANGLE) Sgt. Slaughter/Gen. Adnan burn HULK RULES t-shirt; Kerry Von Erich d. Alan Martin; (UPDATE) DiBiase-Virgil

feud; Greg Valentine double countout vs. Barbarian; Jake Roberts d. Terrence Blaylock; Other winners: Nasty Boys. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

[CHALLENGE]: Jim Duggan d. Keith Steinborn; Mountie d. Burke; Rockers d. Dale Wolfe/Scotty Allen; Greg Valentine d. Brooklyn Brawler; Barbarian/Haku d. Scotty Williams/Kevin Greenough; (WM7 REPORT). RESTHOLD.

[SUPERSTARS]: Davey Boy Smith d. Cliff Sheets; (UPDATE) Bobby Heenan-Bossman saga; Von Erich d. Pex Whatley; Nasties d. Kelly Davis/Brian Costello; (WM7 INTERVIEW) Mean Gene w. Hulk Hogan; Rick Martel d. Frankie Lancaster. Rick blindfolds Frankie; (WM7 REPORT); Undertaker d. Pat Armstrong. RESTHOLD.

LEWA

Misty Blue Simmes/Heidi Lee Morgan d. LaGata/Comrade Orga; Denise Storm d. Alison Royal; Malaya Hosaka d. Nasty Lin-

da but Nasty Cat runs in and the 2 doubleteam Hosaka until Bambi saves w. chair; Bad, Black & Beautiful d. Sindee Paradise/Alma Alvarez; (SEGMENT) The Beast intros her "cousin" Norman; Lady X no contest vs. Beast when Ashley Kennedy, Norman get into it. Beast uses Norman's stuffed rabbit to pound Lady X; (LOUISVILLE SLUGGER) Jim Cornette w. Terri Power. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

USWA SYN

[CHALLENGE]: Bill Dundee/Jeff Jarrett d. Eric Embry/Gary Young but Eric turns on Young and destroys him for losing; [LT. HWT. TITLE] Danny Davis d. Tom Prichard on reversal when Jarrett tells ref Tom used knuckles.

Tom/Steve Austin attack Jeff; Curtis Thompson d. Dog of War; [SOUTHERN TITLE] Jarrett d. Awesome Kong but Prichard/J.C. Ice/Austin run in on Jeff until Young saves; John Tatum d. Khri Germany. DRAW.

[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: (From MID-SOUTH) Prichard/Embry d. Jerry Lawler/Eddie Gilbert; (ANGLE) Prichard/Embry attack Jarrett before match w. The Scorpion. Jeff juices; Tom/Eric attack Eddie before match w. T.D. Steel; (ANGLE) Eddie agrees to team with Jeff vs. Embry/Prichard; (PROFILE) J.C. Ice; (From MID-SOUTH) Bill Dundee d. Tony Anthony but J.C./Doug Gilbert run in after; Dundee d. Keith Eric but Jeff Gaylord runs in on Bill. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

INCOG

[12th RERUN/ICW TITLE] Vic Steamboat d. Tony Atlas to win belt; (TOP 10 CONTENDERS) Clips of contenders' wins; (RE-

PLAY) Undertakers vs. Hoss/Thundermountain when Hoss turns on Thunder; (CLIPS) Psycho, Tasmaniac, Blaze, Ray Oddyssey, Curly Moe; (RERUN) Joe Savoldi d. Southern Jet in 10 sec.; (RERUN) Chris Michaels d. Mondo Kleen; (RUMBLE SEAT/3rd RUN) Tony Rumble/Kevin Von Erich. TRIPLE BOMB...worst show of all time.

TV TEMPO

March 11-17

EW '91

[GA. TAG TOURNEY] Chic Donovan/John Michaels d. Mr. Wrestling/Billy Black; Norman d. Big Bully Busich by DQ; (From UCN) Super Ninja

d. Randy Rose; (HAWAII/1987) Farmer Boy Ito d. Doug Sommers; Mike Winner d. Hangman; (INTL) Part 2 of Hashi vs. Rivera Warrior; Blazers d. Ken Timbs/Steve Pritchard. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

AWA CLASSICS

Jerry Blackwell/Ken Patera draw vs.

Steve O/Buck Zumhofe; (PROFILES) Jimmy Snuka, Larry Zbyszko; (1986) Snuka d. Larry Z by DQ. RESTHOLD.

USWA/WM

(USWA TITLE/From MSC) Lawler d.

Terry Funk to regain belt when he piledrives Funk as ref Jackie Fargo's back turned. Fargo quick counts Funk. Embry/Prichard run in but Fargo/Lawler chase heels; (ANGLE) Embry/Prichard ambush Lawler at announce desk. Eddie Gilbert saves and brawl goes to ring until Texas Hangmen run in but Jarrett saves w. wooden ladder; Hangmen d. Davis/Brian Collins; Eddie/Jarrett d. Austin/Scorpion; Embry/Prichard d. Billy Joe Travis/Chris Frazier; (CAGE MATCH/MSC) Eddie/Jarrett d. Embry/Prichard but heels use chain on faces. Doug Gilbert tries to save but gets decked. Fargo runs in, grabs Tojo Yamamoto's steel case, creams Tom/Eric; Dundee d. Sgt. O'Reilly but Austin runs in & decks Bill w. loaded glove. Bill juices. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

FORGLANE

Bart Sawyer/Mike Winner d. Grappler/Equalizer. Grap slaps Eq after match & orders him out of

ring; (SEGMENT) Grappler slaps Equalizer for doing solo interview & for causing loss; (FIESTA GARDEN) Doug Masters insists on being called "Pretty Boy;" Larry Oliver draw vs. Al Madril; C.W. Bergstrom d. Billy Jack Haynes on reversal when B.J. refuses to release full nelson. Rip Oliver saves; Steve Doll d. Scott Norton by DQ when Norton refuses to release nelson. Sawyer/Winner save; Rip d. Masters; (ANGLE) Haynes lifts Don Coss up, slams him to floor and shoves mike in his chest. DRAW-PLUS.

LUCHA LIERE

[2 WKS. AGO]: Angel Azteca/La Piedad/Mascara Sagrada

d. El Hijo del Gladiador/El Gran Markus Jr./El Angel Blanco Jr. 2-3 falls; Kung Fu/Pierroth Jr./M.S. 1 d. Black Magic/Pirata Morgan/Kato Kung Lee 1 2 straight; El Satanico/El Gigante Kimala/Emilio Charles Jr. d. El Rayo de Jalisco Jr./El Dandy/Atlantis 2-3; Konan el Barbaro d. Mascara Ano Dos Mil; (MASK VS. MASK) Fuerza Guerrera d. El Gallo Tapado 2-3. (Pre-match: Guerrera attacks Topado w. live chicken; Topado unmasked as Rosalio Hernandez Marques. POWERSLAM.

[LAST WEEK]: (FINAL MATCH/HAIR VS. MASK VS. MASK) Aguayo d. Konan in last of triangular match where Mascara's mask was also up. Konan loses mask, leaves Lucha. POWERSLAM-PLUS.

WCW/SYN

[WORLD WIDE]: Terrence Taylor/Buddy Landell d. Bobby Eaton/Tom Zenk when Taylor decks Bobby w.

Alexandra York's laptop. Bobby juices heavy; Steiners d. Rob Morgan/John Peterson; (8-MAN) Tommy Rich/Junkyard Dog/Big

MATWATCH

Page 4

Vol. 4, No. 11/March 18-24

Josh/Ricky Morton d. Magnum Force/State Patrol; Ron Simmons d. Joe Bruce but Butch Reed/Teddy Long ambush Ron; Young Pistols d. Doug Vines/Jeff Sword (Pre-match: Freebirds/D.D. Page come to ringside. Big Daddy Dink piledrives Tracy Smothers but Tracy finally revives); Sid Vicious d. Larry Santo; El Gigante d. Joe Cruz but Ric Flair smashes El in back w. chair until Sting chases Ric. DRAW.

[WCW PRO]: Diamond Dallas Page becomes co-host; Sting d. Tom Sawyer; Simmons d. Mike Thor; Steiners d. Brian Carr/Lou Fabiano; (LARRY'S LEGENDS) Reed/Long but Simmons runs in on Reed & the 2 brawl to pull apart; Pistols d. Patrol; (W. WAR) Nikita Koloff bashes Lex Luger w. new U.S. belt; Dan Spivey d. Santo; Vicious d. Keith Robertson but Brian Pillman ambushes Sid, lowblows him & dropkicks Sid out. Sid goes nuts. RESTHOLD.

WWE/USA

[PRIME TIME]: Demolition d. Tito Santana/Koko B. Ware; Harts d. Sanchez/Martin; Hennig d. Dan

Brazil; Viking d. Costello; Smith d. Haku; Martel d. Lancaster; (ANGLE) Sarge burns Hogan T-shirt; (WM7 REPORT); Undertaker d. Jim Powers; (STUDIO GUESTS) 1. Randy Savage w. retrospective of his WWF career. Sherri Martel brings out parting gifts for Ultimate Warrior; 2. Jake Roberts describes various snakes, plays "pin the tail on the donkey" and slips a snake on Heenan; 3. "Queen of England" knights Heenan but two "Scotland Yard" investigators reveal surveillance tape exposing Queen as fraud. She & Bobby hauled off. DRAW-PLUS.

[SUPERSTARS & STRIPES FOREVER]: Hennig d. Shawn Michaels by DQ when Bossman runs in, chases Heenan. Andre the Giant appears to shake hands with Bubba; Davey Boy Smith d. Jim Corbett; (RECAP) Roberts-Martel saga; (ANGLE) Piper interviews DiBiase, who calls Virgil a "gutter rat." Virg shows & he & Roddy leave Ted standing; (BLINDFOLD MATCH) Martel d. Koko B. Ware; Greg Valentine d. Scott Allen; Hulk Hogan d. Gen. Adnan by DQ when Sarge runs in & pounds on Hulk w. flagpole before applying camel clutch & draping Hulk in Iraqi flag; (REPLAY) Nasty Boys win tag battle royal; Brian Knobbs double DQ vs. Jim Neidhart; Undertaker d. Tugboat. POWERSLAM.

USWA/ESPN

Austin d. Cody Michaels; (CLIP) Pistolero; [LT. HWT. TITLE]

Davis d. Prichard on reversal when Jarrett tells ref Falk Tom used chain; Dundee/Jarrett d. Embry/Young. After, Embry/Austin/Tojo turn on Gary. DRAW.

WCW/TBS

[POWER HOUR]: Spivey d. Isley; Big Josh d. Rip Rogers; Pillman d. Landell; Zenk d. Taylor when Bobby Ea-

ton decks Terrence; (WNN) Gordon Solie w. Sting-Larry Z DANGER ZONE, Taylor-Eaton saga; Tim Horner d. Ron Cumberland; Sting/Gigante d. Flair/Barry Windham when other Horsemen run in & Flair comes off top on El's neck. DRAW-PLUS.

[WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP]: Freebirds d. Keith Hart/Joe Barrett; Taylor d. Eaton when Terrence decks Bobby w. laptop but Zenk tries to tell ref & gets creamed by Curtis Hughes; Rick Steiner d. Mark Mero; Dustin Rhodes d. Pat Rose; [DANGER ZONE] Paul E. w. Dink; (WRAPUP) Sting-Zbyszko, Simmons-Reed feuds; Pistols d. Rogers/Steve Stax; Simmons d. Hacksaw Higgins; (6-MAN) Sting/Luger/El Gigante d. Larry Z/Windham/Spivey. Flair runs in after but Luger snatches chair from Ric & chases him; Vicious d. Brett Sawyer; Owen Hart d. Mark Kyle; Josh d. Morgan; One-Man Gang d. Tommy Angel; (ANGLE) Long/Gang/Kevin Sullivan threaten Simmons, so Ron invites Gang into ring. DRAW-PLUS.

[MAIN EVENT]: Pistols d. Magnum Force; [DANGER ZONE] Landell tells Alexandra York he knows she wants more of him than to be a York Foundation member; Eaton d. Landell when Taylor runs in; Spivey d. T.C. Carter; Josh d. Thor; Sting d. Zbyszko despite pre-match attack by Windham/Arn Anderson. DRAW-PLUS.

LINE'S OF THE WEEK

1. Willie Nelson, WWF: "At WRESTLEMANIA, Uncle Sam wants you. We already know he wants me." 2. Terry Funk, WMC: "Come on down to the Coliseum and you can oink for your group." 3. Funk, WMC:

"Ignorance clings together. You people in Memphis should understand that well." 4. Equalizer, PORTLAND: "People say the Grappler doesn't pay me enough but every week, Grappler gives me a stack of \$1 bills. I put 'em in my pocket and they stick way out." 5. Jerry Lawler, WMC, on Embry's wife: "He took her to the dog races at West Memphis and 15 people bet on her." 6. Doug Masters, PORT.: "I have to leave. I have a date with Julia Roberts." 7. Don Coss, PORT.: "Al Madril lost a hair match with nature." 8. Coss, PORT.: "The food stamps Haynes gave me said not to fold, spindle or mutilate. I feel like I've had all three done to me." 9. Bobby Heenan, PTW, on Vince's yellow jogging suit: "You shoulda left that on the bunch 'til it ripened." 10. Tony Schiavone/Gordon Solie, WWW, on El Gigante: (GS) "His shoes are what...size 16s?" (TS) "I don't know. I've never been up that high in shoes to compare them to anything."

11. Schiavone, WWW, on El's hand: "I know how big it is. I've seen it around a soda can." 12. Kerry Von Erich, WWF, on tornado punch: "When I spin, I guarantee, I'll win." 13. Diamond Dallas Page, WWW, on wrestling Freebirds: "It's like being in a gang war and not knowing anybody." 14. Jake Roberts, PTW, to Heenan on Palestinian viper: "They only feed once every two months. Don't you wish you could?" 15. Eric Embry, WMC: "I could beat Frankenstein if Tom Prichard was refereeing." 16. Heenan/McMahon, PTW, on Vince's black jacket: (V) "This IS a jacket." (BH) "Yeah, if you live in Newark." 17. Jim Ross/Paul E. Dangerously, PTW: (JR) "Got a letter the other day from a fan who remembers when Dustin Rhodes' father wrestled. (PED) "So, is she dropping her lawsuit against you?" 18. Page, WCW PRO, on Steiners: "They're two sandwiches short of a picnic." 19. Lance Russell, WCW PRO, on State Patrol: "They're a little short on organization sometimes." 20. Ric Flair, WCW PRO, on Sting: "You're a lot like Arsenio Hall. You have a lot of trouble knowing who the world heavyweight champion is." 21. Roberts, PTW: "Weasels may taste better...less filling but taste better." 22. Paul E., WCW: "Missy Hyatt's screechy voice makes nails on a blackboard sound like Mozart." 23. Ron Simmons, WCW, to Teddy Long: "You're like a week-old itch on my back."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Funk, WMC, on Jackie Fargo's quick count: "You know what that does to professional wrestling? It puts it in the basement. It puts it in the cellar. It puts it in the sewer." 2. Russell, WCW PRO, on Steiners: "I don't think they're afraid of the Devil himself." 3. Barry Windham, WCW PRO: "Butch Reed is Teddy Long's yes man."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Funk, WMC: "How could I be better off than having a Japanese goof in my corner?" 2. Roddy Piper, WWF, on Paul Bearer: "Has he sold used cars?" 3. Randy Savage, PTW, on Vince's suit: "Did you choose to wear that outfit or did somebody make you?" 4. Savage, PTW, on Elizabeth: "What was her name? I forgot."

PASSWORD OF THE WEEK - Michael St. John, WMC: DESERVANCE. "Embry and Prichard were getting their just deservance."

THE MASK IS GONE: Konan lost his mask last Friday night in a three-way LUCHA LIBRE finale against Perro Aguayo and another Latin star before his WWF debut.

WHICH WAY, THE MATADOR?: Konan will be The Matador for the WWF but last reports have differing thoughts on whether he will be with or without hood. First plan was for him to be a Blue Blazer-type but with Ed Leslie under a mask, it's up in the air whether Vince wants to push two similar masked guys.

THE OFFICIAL REED: Jim Herd told us Monday morning Butch Reed has asked for a 60-day leave of absence. Word continues to surface that he'll be returning to Titan. Herd says Reed has told WCW he needs to sort out pressing personal problems.

THEY'LL DO IT: Reed and Ron Simmons, unless something drastic changes, were to team Thursday night for the skedded Egg Dome match against Big Van Vader and Bam Bam Bigelow. Herd says the match will be edited out of the American pay-per-view taped version April 7.

900 LIVE FUTURES: Lance Russell's WRESTLING HOTLINE 900 INTERACTIVE LIVE spots continue through April. Some upcoming dates where you can call in live: GREAT AMERICAN FANS JAM II (March 25), Paul E. Dangerously (March 27), Sting (April 4, 7-8 p.m. Eastern), Jim Ross (April 20), JIM HERD MEETS THE PRESS (Beverly/Meltzer/Keller, April 27).

LAST TUESDAY: I talked with more than 40 fans on THE WRESTLING HOTLINE last Tuesday night for 90 minutes. It was great fun but I honestly don't know how the callers are picked who get through. A number of you who called in for as long as 10 minutes to listen but didn't get through. I was in Jackson, Lance was in Atlanta and the whole thing was controlled out of Las Vegas.

PERTINENT QUESTIONS: The most prevalent questions on the live HOTLINE involved the Flair-Sting cage match at the Omni and a surprising number of queries about Owen Hart.

SPEAKING OF: The Omni match had Barry Windham and Sid Vicious jumping El Gigante before he could ref the cage match. So Nick Patrick was the sub and Sting did the job. But Gigante escaped after, entered the cage and counted down Ric's shoulders.

ALSO ON THE CARD: Lex Luger beat Sid Vicious with a standard rollup. The show, which had a weak advance, drew a shade over 5,000.

AT CENTER STAGE: Tuesday night's TBS tapings saw few key angles but a lot of interviews: one involved Alexandra York telling Ross she wanted to add Larry Zbyszko and Dustin Rhodes to the York Foundation.

TAKE TWO: Dustin came out and told Alex he'd never be part of her group and put a warning on Terry Taylor and "Big Cat." But when he called Curtis Hughes by his old monicker, tape had to be stopped and a second take done.

OWEN'S ENCORE: Our buddy Scott Hudson tells us Owen again amazed the crowd with his moves but when he went to an armbar, some fans actually chanted "BOR-RING."

EARLY WORK: One WCW official told me an early problem Dusty Rhodes is seeing in Owen is he is "too stoic," not changing expression at all during a match no matter if he's selling or on offense. That's one reason McMahon put him under a mask in the WWF.

A FINAL TV NOTE: One squash six-man had the Young Pistols and Dustin teaming for a win. But a group of heel fans in the third row were harrassing the faces and Tracy Smothers reportedly was getting annoyed. Tracy came out during the next match and challenged the foursome to go outside.

PWF POOP: Eddy Mansfield's involvement in the effort to revive PWF is a real surprise. I had several interviews with Eddy, who grew up in my hometown of Columbus GA, in 1985 after his 20/20 expose. At one point, he told me he'd never go back to wrestling, period!

FLORIDA CARDS: Eddy ran two shows, one at Mount Dora High School and another school card, over the weekend. One had Dick Slater vs. Steve Keirn on top. Buggy McGraw and the Terminator also worked, along with that perennial Florida rerun, Jim Backlund vs. Lou Perez. The only match I think which has been repeated more in the U.S. is Bambi vs. Peggy Lee Leathers.

A HUSTLER STORY: Larry Flynt's HUSTLER magazine has reportedly purchased rights to the story surrounding the mysterious murder three years back of wrestler Ricki Lawless.

BROTHER TULLY: I've enjoyed columns by Mark Nulty and a Carolina writer about Tully Blanchard's Christian conversion. Tully has become an evangelist and is telling his story predominantly in Baptist churches in the Southeast.

LOOKING BACK: In 1985, I interviewed Tully for a minidoc on wrestling for WWAY-TV. He told me then he wanted to retire within five years. He made it, though I doubt he thought he'd be toting a Bible instead of knucks. But in all sincerity, no matter your religious persuasion, you have to admire a guy who has had the courage to walk away and do something benevolent with his life. I hope Tully is a positive influence on many lives and I hope to get Nulty's okay to reprint his piece.

IF WRESTLING WERE REAL...: Terry Funk would have a case. Jackie Fargo's count on Funk to let Jerry Lawler regain the USWA belt was enough to make Teddy Long's on the Road Warriors look like super slo-mo. Funk returned to Memphis Monday for an 8-man cage showdown, teaming with Embry/Prichard/Tojo Yamamoto vs. Lawler/Jarrett/Eddie Gilbert/Fargo.

THE EXPLANATION: USWA had been given a one-week extension from its end date in the Mid-South Coliseum. But when Memphis State won its first-round NIT game, the Tigers gained priority for the MSC for its second round game vs. Arkansas State. So, the NIT game was used as the TV explanation for the move to the 3,000-seat Youth (Pipkin) Building.

REST OF THE SHOW: Also Monday were a J.C. Ice-Uptown Bruno rematch, Brian Christopher (Lawler) vs. Keith Roberson, Johnny Rotten vs. Night Train Jackson, Texas Hangmen vs. Curtis Thompson/Billy Travis, a light heavy title match with El Grande Pistolero defending vs. Danny Davis and a Steve Austin-Bill Dundee contest.

TITLE CHANGE: Pistolero won the USWA light heavyweight belt Friday night in Dallas from Davis.

**WWF SHOWS RALLY;
POWER HITS HIGH MARK**

USA Network's WWF ALL-AMERICAN WRESTLING is about as schizophrenic in the weekly Nielsen cable ratings as the personalities of some of its star performers.

ALL-AM is in the pattern of one strong week and one poor one but the week ending March 11 was its best in several months. ALL-AMERICAN posted a 2.9 rating and percent share of audience, up 38% from the previous edition and enough to win the ratings week. But WCW's POWER HOUR registered its strongest ever Saturday morning audience.

ALL-AMERICAN edged out its sister show, PRIME TIME WRESTLING. The Monday night edition, which featured a Randy Savage retrospective and comedy sequences with the WWF veteran, scored a 2.8 rating to wind up second. PTW dropped 7% from its previous week.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING, led by a Tom Zenk-Buddy Landell matchup ending in a Bobby Eaton save of Zenk, along with a Ric Flair ambush of Ranger Ross, drew a 2.7/5.6, down 4% from the March 2 airing.

The bright spot for WCW was in a second straight surge by POWER HOUR, which has languished with mid-1 range ratings since its move last October to Saturday morning. But March 2, PH drew a 2.0 and the March 9 edition set a new Saturday high for the Jim Ross-Paul E. Dangerously combo. POWER scored a 2.3 rating and all-time record 8.2 percent share. The POWER HOUR audience has jumped 64% in the last two weeks with no appreciable change in format.

CABLE

<u>Week Ending March 11</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Share</u>	<u>Total Homes</u>
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 3/10)	2.9	7.7	1.58 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 3/11)	2.8	4.4	1.53 million
WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 3/9)	2.7	5.6	1.51 million
WCW POWER HOUR (TBS 3/9)	2.3	8.2	1.29 million

TV TEMPO

(Continued from Page 4)

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. THE MEMPHIS SEWER (Funk on Mid-South Coliseum). 2. SCABS & NUBS (Roddy Piper on Skaggs and Knobbs). 3. SLIMEAMANIACS (Sgt. Slaughter on Hogan fans). 4. POP GUNS (Page on Young Pistols).

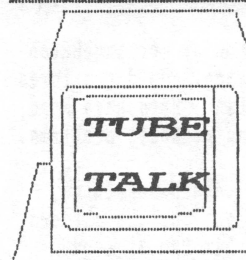
BEST PICTURES - 1. WCW PRO, Lou Fabiano grinning as his chest hairs pulled. 2. WWW, Big Daddy Dink piledriving Smothers. 3. WMC, Embry-Prichard/Lawler-Gilbert angle. 4. WWW, Flair bashing El with chair. 5. PTW, Jake chasing Heenan w. snake. 6. WCW, Closeup of Barry ripping Lex's mouth.

DREADED GLITCH AWARDS - 1. USWA, for graphic of CHRIS Thompson instead of CURTIS. 2. WCW/SYN, for incorrect dates of WRESTLING HOTLINE live spots. Last week, Missy's live night was plugged as Mar. 10 on graphic (it was Mar. 17). Saturday (Mar. 16), my date was plugged four days late and listed as Tuesday, Mar. 9 (Tuesday was Mar. 12).

BEST INTERVIEW - Funk, WMC. The Master does it again.

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Tony Schiavone, WWF: "...Katie bar the door." 2. Piper, WWF: "...be there or be square." 3. St. John, USWA, "...fighting fire with fire." 4. Dustin Rhodes, WCW PRO: "...in pullic, if you wee-yull." 5. Roberts, PTW: "...what goes around comes around."

BOO AWARDS - 1. Fuerza Guerrera, LUCHA LIBRE, for hitting El Gallo Tapado with live chicken. I'll boo any animal abuse. 2. WCW, for that horrible audio "sweetening" track which is the most unnatural ambience to the cadence of the matches. Get rid of it!



Enjoyed being on the first hour of THE LARRY KATZ SHOW Saturday night. Axel Rotten did hour two....PRIME TIME WRESTLING moves to permanent Tuesdays during the WLAFL season next week.... Eddy Mansfield's PWF cards drew 200 Friday night at Mt. Dora FL and 100 Saturday at Sanford. Both nights, Steve Keirn d. Dick Slater to keep the Florida title. The Heartbreakers held onto the PWF/U.S. tag titles with DQ losses each night....On the tube last week: Lou Albano (INTO THE NIGHT WITH RICK DEES) and Michael Wallstreet (in a belated INSIDE EDITION profile)....Boni Blackstone's WVEU-TV seven-hour marathon now called SATURDAY NIGHT SUPERSTARS. Seems WAGA, which now has WWF SUPERSTARS OF WRESTLING, complained about the SOW title on Ch. 69. WWF office admitted Joe Pedicino created the SOW name a year before Titan changed the name of its flagship show but no problems. WVEU leads off with WWF CHALLENGE....Signs of Dusty: profuse juice by Bobby Eaton on syndie show last week... Craig (Tragic) Johnson to do a month's worth of GEORGIA ALL-STAR with Pedicino and Scott Hudson March 31....That WCW POWER HOUR rating came with only a 2.0/7.1 lead-in from BONANZA, so a lot of folks tuned in....Axel Rotten's IWL will tape 24 matches Saturday in the Baltimore area....Chris Crosby will do the WRESTLEMANIA VII story from L.A. in next week's issue.... As for the promised semi-important announcement we plugged in last week's issue. Sorry, folks, it hasn't happened yet.... One quick correction: Ron Lemieux's special ARENA REPORT offer is 7 issues for \$5, not \$5 for 7 as we reported last week. My apologies, Ron. Also: the address is ARENA REPORT, P.O. BOX 952547, LAKE MARY FL 32795. See ya next week!

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